



30 September 2013

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq  
Minister of the Environment  
Member of Parliament for Nunavut  
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière  
10 Wellington Street, 28th Floor  
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H3

Fax: +1 819 953 0279

Email: [Minister@ec.gc.ca](mailto:Minister@ec.gc.ca), [Leona.Aglukkaq@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Leona.Aglukkaq@parl.gc.ca)

Re: *Canada's Action on Climate Change*

Dear Minister Aglukkaq,

The Canadian Council of Churches wishes to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Minister of the Environment and we are writing to continue the dialogue on climate change that we have enjoyed with your predecessor, the honourable Peter Kent.

Beside the meetings and correspondence with Minister Kent, we have also benefitted from meetings with former Senior Policy Advisor Monica Kugelmass and the helpful exchange we had with Mr. Dan McDougall, Canada's Chief Negotiator and Ambassador for Climate Change, in Montreal on May 29<sup>th</sup> this year.

We do not see the climate crisis as an environmental problem that can simply be solved technically. Rather, it is a moral crisis: excessive self-interest, short-term thinking, destructive competition and greed have led to unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. We live in hope that as a society we can look beyond individual and national interests and collectively work for a better world that sustains all of us economically and ecologically—both now and for future generations.

Minister, faith communities in Canada are deeply concerned that our federal government's current efforts to adequately reduce our greenhouse gas emissions do not sufficiently address the true extent of the climatic crisis. In early May, the world learned that atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide have risen to 400 parts per million, an amount not present in three to five million years. Representing Nunavut as you do, and as Chair of the Arctic Council you will be keenly aware of changes in the Arctic that affect local communities and the Inuit way of life, and are directly related to climate change.

In light of the increasingly alarming context, we wish to follow-up on three concerns that our previous letter to Minister Kent of November 21 2012 and his February 28, 2013 response considered.

**1. Canada's part in setting and reaching fair and clear carbon emissions targets to ensure global average temperatures stay below a 2 degree increase from pre-industrial levels.**

We urge Canada to develop an effective plan to reach Canada's stated goal of 17% below the 2005 emission level by 2020. We are alarmed by reports that Canada is not likely to meet even this modest goal. In May 2012, Mr. Scott Vaughan, Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, reported that the government's approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions is unlikely to meet Canada's target for 2020. Subsequent information supports that prediction. We also recognize that this goal is not as ambitious as the Kyoto Protocol and is inadequate to avoid devastating climatic impacts. Various reports have indicated that, cumulatively, pledges under the Copenhagen Accord fall far short of the range of emission reductions – 25 to 40% by 2020 - that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change deems necessary to keep warming below a 2 degree Celsius rise.

In Mr. Kent's letter to us, he wrote that the Government of Canada is committed to implementing a sector-by-sector regulatory plan to achieve additional reductions until the target is reached. We anxiously await the long-promised announcement of regulations for the oil and gas industry. However, we share the Commissioner's concern that the regulatory approach is not supported by an overall implementation plan that would explain how the regulations work together to meet the 2020 target.

We urge you to communicate a complete plan, including implementation details, to our members and the Canadian public. We also encourage the Government of Canada to follow this with a more ambitious long-term plan that will be more effective in slowing the climate crisis.

**2. Play a constructive role in the design of the Green Climate Fund and contribute public funds to assist the poorest and most affected countries to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.**

We are thankful that Canada has already provided \$1.2 billion between 2010 and 2012 as part of its Copenhagen commitment to help developing countries adapt to and mitigate climate change. We are pleased that Mr. McDougall acknowledged an ongoing role for public climate finance as part of the Copenhagen Accord promise to mobilize up to \$100 billion/year by 2020 for developing countries. Yet, Canada has made no specific commitment to longer term financing.

We encourage Canada, in keeping with the Doha Climate Change Conference request, to commit *at least* \$1.2 billion for the 2013–2015 period. Ongoing public funds will be an

essential component of this goal of \$100 billion/year by 2020. We urge you to ensure that half of Canada's contribution over this period be directed to adaptation projects in the form of grants, allowing countries of the Global South to better face the effects of rising temperatures and extreme weather. We further recommend that these monies not be diverted from Canada's current international development budget.

We also urge Canada to work constructively towards a fair, transparent and democratically governed Green Climate Fund to become the main channel for international climate finance.

**3. A Canadian energy plan for renewable and non-renewable sources of energy that ensures a sustainable and healthy future for Canada.**

Mr. Kent referred this matter to your colleague, the Hon. Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources, and we have also begun a dialogue with Tim Norris, Director of Policy at Natural Resources Canada. We would like to see Canada move more expeditiously to end subsidies to fossil fuel companies to meet the commitment our government made in 2009. We were pleased that Mr. McDougall expressed the government's commitment to taking more action to reduce these subsidies. This would be a concrete expression of sound federal stewardship, saving financial resources for use in the promotion of the necessary non-carbon energy future.

Minister, protecting all the Creator's environmental gifts is our common task, guided by our call to care for all Creation. Just as Canada is committed to living within its economic means, we must also live within our ecological means. To paraphrase the October 2011 *Canadian Interfaith Call for Leadership and Action on Climate Change* we need to seek coherence between our beliefs and our actions, so that our lives, our consumption habits as well as our public policies better reflect a new relationship with humanity and the Earth itself. Representatives of Canada's faith communities will be attending COP19 in Warsaw. We look forward to continuing the conversation with you, and taking collaborative action with the Government of Canada in this same spirit.

Respectfully yours, and with the assurance of our prayers for our leaders in the Government of Canada,



Joy Kennedy  
Chair, Commission on Justice and Peace

*The Canadian Council of Churches is the largest ecumenical body in Canada, now representing 25 churches of Anglican; Eastern and Roman Catholic; Evangelical; Free Church; Eastern and Oriental Orthodox; and Historic Protestant traditions. Together we represent 85% of the Christians in Canada.*

Attachment: *Canadian Interfaith Call for Leadership and Action on Climate Change*

Cc Hon. Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources  
David Anderson, Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources  
Megan Leslie, Environment Critic, New Democratic Party of Canada  
John McKay, Environment Critic, Liberal Party of Canada  
Jean-François Fortin, Bloc Québécois  
Elizabeth May, Green Party of Canada  
Members of the All-Party Climate Change Caucus  
Dan McDougall, Ambassador for Climate Change  
Senator Grant Mitchell, Liberal Party of Canada  
Major Jim Champ, President, The Canadian Council of Churches